

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (previously presented) A method for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, the method comprising:

prior to the communication of the information, a service unit of the communications system is contacted and a request for the communication of the information is thereupon passed to the service unit,

wherein the service unit passes the request for the communication of the information to two or more electronic agents which interact with the service unit within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication, and the electronic agents being respectively assigned to one of the network operators and making decisions, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, by means of a decision logic, according to criteria specified by the respective network operator,

the service unit prompts the electronic agents, once or several times, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information,

an offer submitted by one of the electronic agents in response to the prompt, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, is confirmed to the electronic agent by the service unit as having been accepted,

the service unit initiates the communication of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom the electronic agent is assigned, and

the electronic agent communicates negotiated conditions for the transmission of the information via the communications network of the network operator to the network management unit of the network operator.

2. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request for the communication of the information requests the establishment of a communication connection between a calling terminal and one or more called terminals for the communication of the information via the communication connection.

3. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request for the communication of the information requests connectionless communication of information from a first terminal to one or more second terminals.

4. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein, with a prompt to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information, the service

unit specifies to the two or more electronic agents one or more conditions for this communication.

5. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 4, wherein the service unit successively alters one or more of the conditions, respectively associated with prompts, until one of the electronic agents submits an offer.

6. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the offer submitted by one of the electronic agents in response to the prompt, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, specifies to the service unit one or more conditions for the communication.

7. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 4, wherein one or more conditions specify the nature and manner of the communication of the information.

8. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 4, wherein one or more conditions specify the charging of the communication of the information.

9. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein offers submitted by electronic agents in response to the prompt, through interaction within the

framework of the electronic marketplace, relate only to a partial communication of the information and the service unit confirms several offers, so that a complete communication of the information results.

10. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein criteria specified by the respective network operator relate to the strategy of the network operator in respect of other network operators.

11. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein criteria specified by the respective network operator relate to the network loading of the network operator.

12. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein electronic agents register themselves on the electronic marketplace for information communication and only registered electronic agents receive prompts from the service unit.

13. (currently amended) ~~A service unit, embodied in a~~ A computer readable storage medium storing a control program to have a computer carry out a method for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, the method comprising:

when a request for the communication of information is passed to ~~the a~~ service agent~~unit~~, the service agent~~unit~~ passes the request for the communication of the information to two or more electronic agents which interact with the service unit within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication,

wherein, the electronic agents being respectively assigned to one of the network operators and making decisions, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, by means of a decision logic, according to criteria specified by the respective network operator,

the service unit prompting electronic agents, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, once or several times, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information,

the service unit confirming an offer, submitted by one of the electronic agents, as having been accepted, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, and

the service unit initiating the communication of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom the electronic agent is assigned.

14. (currently amended) A computer readable storage medium encoded with program code for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the

computer readable storage medium is designed so that, in execution on a server, the computer readable storage medium performs the ~~function of the service unit~~method according to Claim 13.

15. (currently amended) A server for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the server comprises a computer readable storage medium storing a control program to have a computer perform the ~~functions of the service unit~~method according to Claim 13.

16. (currently amended) ~~An electronic agent, embodied in a~~ A computer readable storage medium storing a control program to have a computer carry out a method for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, the method comprising:

~~the an~~ electronic agent interacting, within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication, with a service unit which passes ~~to~~ requests to the electronic agent for the communication of information,

making decisions, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information,, by means of a decision logic according to criteria which are specified by a network operator to whom the electronic agent is assigned,

when prompted by the service unit, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information, the electronic agent makes a decision, by means of the decision logic according to the criteria, to submit or not to submit an offer in response to the prompt, and the electronic agent communicates negotiated conditions for the transmission of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom the electronic agent is assigned, to a network management unit of the network operator, when an offer submitted by the electronic agent is confirmed by the service unit as having been accepted.

17. (currently amended) A computer readable storage medium encoded with program code for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the computer readable storage medium is designed so that, in execution on a server, the computer readable storage medium performs the ~~function of the electronic agent~~method according to Claim 16.

18. (currently amended) A server for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the server comprises a computer readable storage medium storing a

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control program to have a computer perform the ~~functions of the electronic agent~~method
according to Claim 16.